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TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: March 23, 2010
SUBJECT: 2009 National Blue Ribbon School Winners

PURPOSE:

To recognize the six Maryland schools that were recently named 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 1982 the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon Schools Program has celebrated many of America's most successful schools. For almost as many years, Maryland has partnered with the U.S. Department of Education. Maryland schools have consistently been honored in Washington, D.C. by the U.S. Secretary of Education and sometimes by the President.

Being named a National Blue Ribbon School is a prestigious honor and the application process is extremely rigorous. Since 1982, with over 125,000 public and private schools in America, only 4% of schools have ever achieved National Blue Ribbon School status.

The program gives us an opportunity to shine the spotlight on high achieving and dramatically improving schools in our State. Maryland is cited as the leader among the states in recognizing and engaging Blue Ribbon School leaders and teachers. We honor these schools with a State dinner and a Legislative tribute at the State House in Annapolis. In addition, each Blue Ribbon School is included on a *Tour of Excellence* with visits by State and local education leaders. Often we engage the talented principals and teachers from these schools in helping guide Maryland education policy and improvement initiatives.

Each year, up to six schools can be selected as Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools. Once selected these schools are then recommended to the U.S. Department of Education for National Blue Ribbon School Awards.



Sponsors:

The following sponsors provide underwriting and gifts for our Blue Ribbon Schools program: Comcast, EduTrax, State Farm Insurance, Sylvan, Verizon, SMART Technologies, and Joe Corbi's Pizza.

Commendations and Presentations:

State Board Citations will be presented as well as Governor's Citations. Commemorative photos will be taken.

Winning 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools:

Anne Arundel County

Southern High School

Principal: Maryalice Todd

Southern High is a high achieving and dramatically improved school with HSA reading proficiency scores at 95.4% and math proficiency at 98.4%. In the last five years, four Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year winners have been from Southern. The number of AP courses has grown with 24 currently being offered. The percentage of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses who took AP exams rose from 68% in 2007 to 87% in 2008. Southern High had the highest percentage increase of any county high school – 22 percent – in the number of students taking the SAT test in 2008 as compared to the previous year. In the Class of 2009, 97.6% of the students had met the state High School Assessment requirements by the beginning of their senior year. As a result of business underwriting, the school has a new college and career center in development.

Baltimore City

Western High School

Principal: Eleanor Matthews

Western has achieved in HSA English/reading and math with reading proficiency reaching 98.9% and math at 98.4%. It has the highest percentage (94.9%) of Class of 2009 members in Baltimore City meeting HSA requirements. The school succeeds in spite of the fact that it serves a significant number (44%) of economically disadvantaged students. Western is the oldest all-girls public high school in the United States. It was just awarded a bronze medal from *U.S. News and World Report* as a top high school in the United States. One hundred percent of its graduates are accepted into four year colleges/universities and 2008 graduates won over 4 million dollars in grants and awards. Graduates have had successful careers in diverse fields such as medicine, law, politics,

education, aviation, journalism, technology, music, theater, dance and theology. One of the schools famous graduates is Dr. Nancy Grasmick.

Baltimore County

Seventh District Elementary School

Principal: Leslie Brooks

With 100% of its students proficient and above in both reading and math in 2008, Seventh District has succeeded in encouraging advanced learning, with 79% advanced in 5th grade reading and 62.9% advanced in 5th grade math. The school has received recognition for continuous, sustained MSA performance over the past four years. Staff members bring special abilities in professional development for the school system and in mentoring and leadership. The reading specialist models demonstration lessons throughout the system; staff members are district award winners as well, with titles such as Rookie Teacher of the Year, Assistant Principal's Award for Self Development, and the Principal's Award for Academic Achievement. Seventh District is proud of its positive parent involvement programs which encourage large numbers of family members to attend school functions.

Howard County

Hammond Middle School

Principal: Kerry McGowan

Hammond has excelled with 8th grade reading at 97.1% of students proficient and above and 92.3% proficient and above in math. MSA performance has been recognized in previous years by the Maryland State Department of Education and the NAACP. Improvement is a mark of excellence and Hammond's performance in 2008 as compared to the previous year increased by 22.9% in reading and 15.3% in math. For the last three years the school has been recognized as a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support Exemplar School. It also was recognized by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth and has been awarded "Green School" status through 2010. Teachers are outstanding leaders winning awards such as Music Educator of the Year and National Board Certification.

Montgomery County

Highland Elementary School

Principal: Raymond Myrtle

In spite of an 82% economically disadvantaged student population and 62% of students who are English language learners, Highland has achieved in the top 40% of all elementary schools in state assessments in reading and mathematics. 92.2% of fifth grade students were proficient or above in reading and 93.3% in math. From 2003 to 2008 the school increased 56.9% in overall MSA reading, improving from 36.9% Advanced/Proficient in 2003 to 93.8% in 2008. From 2003 to 2008 the school increased

51.6% in math, going from 42.7% Advanced/Proficient in 2003 to 94.3 in 2008. Highland attributes much of its success to consistent and frequent teacher team analysis and a strong emphasis on literacy and writing. It also has 8 ESOL teachers and 5 special education teachers who are fully included in all classrooms.

Worcester County

Stephen Decatur Middle

Principal: Dr. Mel Ross

A high achieving school, 94.2% of Stephen Decatur Middle students scored proficient and above in 8th grade reading and 95.4% were proficient and above in 8th grade math. In grade eight, 69% of test takers scored at the “advanced” level in Mathematics and 60% percent scored at the “advanced” level in Reading. This past year, 88% of the eighth grade students passed the algebra HSA. The school has eight National Board Certified teachers, the highest concentration of NBC teachers in any one school in the Worcester County Public School System. Decatur Middle teachers are award winners such as its 2007 Maryland Teacher of the Year, Michelle Hammond and its 2008 Maryland Teacher of the Year State Finalist, Amy Gallagher. Out of 1,200 schools nationwide, Decatur Middle was a finalist for the 2006 Intel Schools of Distinction in Mathematics Achievement.

ACTION:

The item is for recognition and information only.